

A VALEDICTORY ADDRESS DELIVERED BY THE OUTGOING PRESIDENT PROF. OLUSEGUN ATANDA @ THE 9TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND WORKSHOP OF THE MYCOTOXICOLOGY SOCIETY OF NIGERIA (6TH- 8TH AUGUST, 2014) @ KEFFI, NASARAWA STATE.

The Honourable Minister of Information,
Mr. Labaran Maku,
The Honourable Commissioner for Agriculture, Nasarawa State,
Hon. Danladi Madaki,
The Acting VC, Nasarawa State University,
Prof. Muhammad Akaro Mainoma,
The Guest Lecturer, Prof. T.A. Gbodi,
The Chair of LOC, Prof. Yakubu. B. Ngwai,
Representatives of Regulatory Agencies and Industries,
Distinguished Academics and Professionals,
Our dear Students,
Farmers and Market Women,
Gentlemen of the Press,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

I welcome you all to the 9^h Annual Conference and Workshop of the Mycotoxicology Society of Nigeria tagged “Keffi, 2014”; whose theme is **Impact of Mycotoxins on Nutrition, Health and Food Security**”. It is also with great joy that I’m reading this valedictory address as the President of the Society as the good Lord has been very faithful to us.

I’m indeed grateful to the almighty God that this Conference is taking place in Keffi against all odds in view of the recent political situation in this part of the country and Nasarawa State in particular.

The Mycotoxicology Society, founded in 2006, is a body of scientists in the academia, industries, regulatory agencies and other stakeholders in the food and feed sectors united by the need to create awareness on mycotoxins. Mycotoxins are secondary metabolites of fungi produced on agricultural produce often from farm, during processing and storage up to the dining table. The Society currently has its secretariat at the Central Laboratory Complex of the National Agency for Food and Drug administration and Control (NAFDAC), Oshodi, Lagos, Nigeria. The Society carries out research, collaborates with colleagues outside Nigeria, publishes information there from and coordinates extension activities related to mycotoxins in Nigeria so that such findings can be applied for the resolution of mycotoxin problems and the preservation of food resources.

The dangers inherent in the consumption of mycotoxin-contaminated meals which may include kidney/liver disorders and immuno-suppressions are made available to the general populace in local languages at appropriate fora. Our Society is the only national formal Mycotoxicology Society in Africa.

It is a thing of joy to note that the membership of the Society is increasing daily as five new off-shore members recently joined the Society. I'm happy to further inform you that the first chapter of the book – “Mycotoxins and Food Safety in Developing Countries” edited by Dr. Hussaini Makun (Vice-President- North), published by INTEC publishers, Croatia; written by members of the Society and titled “Fungal and Mycotoxin Contamination of Nigerian Foods and Feeds” is continually achieving impressive readership results and has been accessed by more than 1,300 viewers (<http://www.intechopen.com/account/login>).

I have followed up my request to the United Nations for the creation of a world “Mycotoxins Day” by filing my petition through the official channel- The Federal Ministry of Health. We also count on the support of the Honourable Minister of Information on this herculean task. I'm happy to inform you that we will be launching our peer- reviewed journal- MYCOTOXICOLOGY, today. I want to salute the editorial team led by the Editor of the Society, - Dr. E.O. Ewuola for their tireless effort, the reviewers and Dr. S.T. Anjorin for his pioneering work.

I urge our members to make use of information given to them judiciously and not to treat them with levity. I also urge them to continually patronise the World Mycotoxin Agenda Coloumn of the World Mycotoxin Journal. The Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa (PACA) first Partnership Platform Meeting (PPM) will be taking place in the African Union Commission Headquarters, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia between the 7th-9th, October, 2014. Similarly, the 8th conference of the World Mycotoxin Forum will be taking place in Vienna, Austria between the 10th – 12th November, 2014. Furthermore, the 2nd International Symposium on Mycotoxins in Nuts and Dried Fruits (ISMNDF) will be taking place between 8th -11th September, 2015 in Abuja, Nigeria and our own there Dr. Anthony Negedu of Raw Materials Research and Development Council (RMRDC) is the contact person. The first African Mycotoxicology Conference will also be taking place in Kenya in 2015.

Mr Honourable Minister and distinguished guests according to the recent Country-Wide Assessment carried out in 2012 on behalf of Bill gates Foundation and which I acted as the Lead Consultant and the recent publication by Adetunji *et al.*, 2014, the Derived Savanna Zone of the country which includes Nasarawa State and the Southern Guinea Savanna have very high risk of mycotoxin contamination of their

crops especially maize and groundnut and this calls for caution and intervention strategies.

More than before there is the need for Nigeria to formulate a Mycotoxin Policy and also enhance the speedy passage of the Biosafety Bill at the National Assembly in order to minimise the disturbing alerts of the rejection of some of our food products like maize, “ogbono”, “egusi” etc due to mycotoxin contamination. I also want to bring to our remembrance that mycotoxin contamination was a principal factor in the disappearance of the famous “ Groundnut Pyramids of Kano”.

Finally I want to thank the outgoing EXCO, for their tireless effort towards the growth of the Society especially those that have worked with me for the past four years and wish to say we have done our best and leave the rest for posterity to judge.

Some of our achievements include:

1. Registration of the Society with the CAC with a full-fledged constitution.
2. Internationalization of the Society
3. Launching of the Society’s Sticker
4. Issuance of Membership Certificates
5. Securing Travel Grants for Members of the Society
6. Launching of MYCOTOXICOLOGY-Society’s journal

We appreciate our Honourable Minister for finding time to attend this Conference, the efforts of our host, Prof. Muhammad Akaro Mainoma, the Acting VC of this University, the RMRDC, the Nigerian Agricultural Quarantine Service and other donors for their contribution towards the success of this conference. We also appreciate the Guest Lecturer, Prof. T.A. Gbodi, the Chair of LOC, Prof. Yakubu. B. Ngwai and his team and our own Zonal Coordinator (North Central) Mr. Isaac Ogara for midwifing the staging of this Conference in Nasarawa State.

Once again I thank you and wish us all a happy conference.

Prof. Olusegun Atanda

President, MYCOTOXSON

6TH August, 2014.